

# OVERMATCH: ENABLING THE INFANTRY RIFLE SQUAD AS THE FOUNDATION OF THE DECISIVE FORCE

A Monograph

by

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## ABSTRACT

OVERMATCH: ENABLING THE INFANTRY RIFLE SQUAD AS THE FOUNDATION OF THE DECISIVE FORCE, by Major Philip J. Mundweil, 40 pages.

Upon assuming duties as the Chief-of-Staff of the United States Army, General Martin Dempsey announced a priority focus on the infantry squad. Anticipating uncertainty in the future operational environment, and an enhanced role of the squad based on an increasing battlespace, Dempsey established a requirement to ensure that the rifle squad would be enabled with what he termed “overmatch.” While previous attempts by the Army to reform the composition of the squad have focused on adjusting manning or fielding new weapons systems, overmatch was not achieved. A more effective method to enable a squad with overmatch is to increase squad capability, focusing specifically on developing the human dimension. Case studies of squads operating in both combined arms maneuver and wide area security operations illustrate the impact of the human dimension on small units, and the potential to achieve overmatch at the squad level. The success demonstrated by squads in the contemporary operating environment, which provides insight into future expectations of the rifle squad, indicates the potential operational or even strategic contributions that can be expected from a small infantry unit when enabled with overmatch.

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## ACRONYMS

AR	Automatic Rifleman
BCT	Brigade Combat Team
COLT	Combat Observation and Lasing Team
COP	Combat Outpost
FBCB2	Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below
FOB	Forward Operating Base
GRN	Grenadier
PFC	Private First Class
RFLM	Rifleman
SAMS	School of Advanced Military Studies
SBCT	Stryker Brigade Combat Team
SFC	Sergeant First Class
SGT	Sergeant
SL	Squad Leader
SPC	Specialist
SSG	Staff Sergeant
TL	Team Leader
TRADOC	Training and Doctrine Command

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## INTRODUCTION

In his remarks at the Association of the United States Army Institute of Land Warfare Breakfast on 5 May 2011, then Chief-of-Staff of the United States Army, General Martin E. Dempsey, stated that one of his focus areas when attempting to shape the conditions for the Army of 2020 was the infantry squad.<sup>1</sup> Specifically he noted that the infantry squad is the unit of action that engages in battle with enemy forces at an equal level, or as he characterized it, “a fair fight.” Dempsey noted the significant resources that the echelons above the squad such as the Battalion, Brigade, and Division possess that provide advantage over their opponent, and as the new Chief-of-Staff, he wanted to identify opportunities to transfer that same advantage, or the concept of overmatch, to the infantry squad. The future force would be based on an examination “from the bottom up,” as opposed to designing a force looking at Divisions or Brigade Combat Teams, the traditional force structures designed to conduct independent operations. While the idea to examine the structure of the squad, the basic fighting unit of the United States Army, is certainly not a new concept, deciding to focus on the squad as the unit to enable with overmatch is innovative. However, the exact meaning of the term overmatch and the method for an infantry squad to achieve overmatch are unclear.

Since the end of World War II, the United States Army has conducted over twenty studies attempting to determine the optimum composition of an infantry rifle squad, with each study focusing on fielding new weapons and equipment to squads of varying strengths. All studies were composition focused, providing solutions based simply on an adjustment of the composition of the squad – changing the manning or providing the squad with a new piece of equipment. As discussed by many Army leaders, despite the twenty studies conducted the squad

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<sup>1</sup>Martin E. Dempsey, “CSA remarks to AUSA Institute of Land Warfare breakfast,” U.S. Army, <http://www.army.mil/article/56117/> (accessed November 17, 2012).

of today still operates virtually the same way it did immediately after World War II: using paper maps, line of sight radios, and functioning as part of a larger force. The focus on the composition has not developed a lasting squad with established capacity, thus the necessity to focus on the squad as the Army looks to structure the force in a post-Iraq and Afghanistan context. An alternative method to enhance squad effectiveness, as an approach to enable the formation with overmatch, is to focus on capability, or skills resident in the formation that are primarily a result of training and leadership. In a 1958 *Army* article, General William DuPuy, observed that while you can see the individuals that make up the squad, the concept that binds those individuals is the organizational ideal jointly held by them all.<sup>2</sup> DuPuy is referring to the human dimension, or conditions that members of a team develop, which increases the capability of the formation. With an increased capability, the composition can vary, but the formation will be better prepared to accomplish its mission.

The solution when attempting to answer how to enable a squad with overmatch will not simply be to adjust the manning or to outfit the squad with another piece of gear. An infantry squad best achieves overmatch through leader development enabled with operational level support, rather than simply through reorganizing or reequipping. In an attempt to ascertain how to enable the squad to win in future conflicts, shared understanding of exactly what the non-doctrinal term overmatch means must be established, as well as the expectations for the squad in future conflict. Additionally there must be an understanding of past attempts to reform the squad, as well as awareness of the current composition and disposition of the contemporary squad. Contemporary examples of squads conducting operations in Afghanistan, from the 10th Mountain Division and 1st Infantry Division, who actually achieve overmatch in both combined arms

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<sup>2</sup>Richard M. Swain, *Selected Papers of General William E. DePuy: First Commander, US Army, Training and Doctrine Command, 1 July 1973* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1994), 18.

maneuver and wide area security operations, solidify the notion that overmatch through capability development is realistic. Analysis of the squads through comparison to the tenets of unified land operations, the Army's warfighting doctrine, indicates the value of a rifle squad to the overall success of the force. Finally, as composition still has a role in enabling a squad with overmatch, as technological advances continue to be necessary for battlefield success, insight into current projects integrating both capability and composition developments at the maneuver center of excellence will highlight recommendations to prioritize development of the capability, which will ensure success in future operations.

### OVERMATCH AND DOCTRINE

As noted above, doctrine does not explain the concept of overmatch. The term overmatch is not defined, nor even mentioned, in either Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Army Doctrine Publication 1-02, *Operational Terms and Military Symbols*, or the expanded Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1-02, *Operational Terms and Military Symbols*. These dictionary-like manuals hold virtually all doctrinal terms and concepts for both the Army, in the case of the Doctrine Publication and Reference Publication, and the Joint Force, in the case of the Joint Publication. Overmatch is also not discussed in Army Doctrine Publication 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*; Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-0, *Mission Command*; or Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-90, *Offense and Defense*, or its precursor, Field Manual 3-90, *Tactics*. These publications reference Army warfighting concepts, and serve as the doctrinal basis that guide planning and action. Field Manual 3-21.8, *The Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad*, references the term in the appendix on Shoulder-Launched Munitions

and Close Combat Systems.<sup>3</sup> However, the reference is to overwhelming firepower that accompanies the use of close combat missile systems, such as an XM-141 Assault Rocket, but does not provide insight General Dempsey's reference to the overmatch concept.

However, through examination of Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations*, the overmatch concept is referenced in the chapter on Joint Operations across the Range of Military Operations, which focuses on planning various types of military operations. In the specific discussion on phasing joint operations, the publication notes that during the critical fourth phase of military operations, known as the dominate phase which focuses on breaking the enemy's will to resist, or in noncombat situations, to control the operational environment, success depends on overmatching enemy capabilities at the critical time and place.<sup>4</sup> It is likely from this concept that Lieutenant General Robert Brown, then-Commander of the Maneuver Center of Excellence at Fort Benning, developed a typology for overmatch in an article in the Sept/Oct 2011 issue of *Infantry*.<sup>5</sup> Brown defined overmatch as the ability to successfully execute critical tasks against projected threat forces across the operational spectrum, concluding with decisive operations that defeat the adversary and achieve the operational objective while retaining our own capability to plan, execute, and support further missions.<sup>6</sup> General Brown noted that victory will come to the force that achieves overmatch over the other. Using this definition, which should be added into

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<sup>3</sup>U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-21.8: *The Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army), B-6.

<sup>4</sup>U.S. Government Printing Office, Joint Publication (JP) 3-0: *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense. 2011), V-8.

<sup>5</sup>LTG Robert B. Brown, "9 As 1: Small Unit Leader Development – A Paradigm Shift," *Infantry* (Sept/Oct 2011): 24.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

future doctrinal references, common understanding of a desired end state is achieved, and the process to properly enable a squad can move forward.

Though General Dempsey first initiated the overmatch concept to the infantry squad in May 2011, he was promoted shortly thereafter to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and was replaced by General Raymond Odierno on 7 September 2011. Despite the leadership change, the focus on overmatch remained, and the concept remains a high priority for the Army, despite increasing budgetary limitations. Lieutenant General Robert Lennox, the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-8, echoed the overmatch focus in the October 2011 issue of *Army*, when he noted that the goal of the Army G-8 is to equip American soldiers so that they never go into a fair fight.<sup>7</sup> In the 2012 Army Strategic Planning Guidance, published on 19 April 2012, Secretary of the Army John H. McHugh and General Raymond Odierno, the current Chief of Staff of the Army, specifically lists achieving overmatch at the squad level as a mid-term objective priority. Specifically, “The Army will see greater overmatch capability from the squad level up through brigade level.... We will ensure that our squads are never again in a fair fight.”<sup>8</sup> The relevance for a squad enabled with overmatch is due to the nature of the expanding battle space and future conflict, and the role the army expects the squad to play in that environment.

#### THE ROLE OF THE SQUAD IN FUTURE CONFLICT

Predicting future conflict locations or anticipated battle spaces is difficult. However, there are some guides that serve as cognitive starting points. Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 525-3-6, *The United States Army Functional Concept for Movement and Maneuver*

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<sup>7</sup>Robert P. Lennox, “Objective Overmatch: Equipping the Squad in Afghanistan.” *Army* (October, 2011): 183.

<sup>8</sup>U.S. Department of the Army, “2012 Army Strategic Planning Guidance.” U.S. Army, <http://usarmy.vo.llnwd.net/e2/c/downloads/243816.pdf> (accessed on November 14, 2012), 9.

2016–2028, describes the future operational environment as difficult to predict, though subject to rapid and even radical changes. Threat forces range from small criminal bands to well-equipped military formations experienced in close fighting. Threats will possess incredibly destructive weapons and technology, and will be dispersed over widespread areas. Simultaneously, an indifferent indigenous population will not align itself with U.S. forces unless security can be guaranteed to the populace.<sup>9</sup>

One of the trends suggested notes that the battle space of the future will be increasingly expanding which means that squads will increasingly operate at much greater distances than they have historically. In *Envisioning Future Warfare*, General Gordon Sullivan and then-Colonel James Dubik explain the relationship between increased lethality of weapons over time and unit dispersion on a battlefield. They explain that as weapons continue to increase in lethality, units will disperse to increase survivability. Evidence presented shows the area occupied by a force of 100,000 being one square kilometer in antiquity, 20 square kilometers during the Napoleonic Wars, 248 square kilometers during World War II, and 213,200 square kilometers in the Gulf War.<sup>10</sup> Dr. James Schneider illustrated the similar concept of the “empty battlefield” in his Theoretical Paper Number Four, “Vulcan’s Anvil: The American Civil War and the Foundations of Operational Art,” when he noted battles in antiquity populated to a density of one man per ten square meters, increasing to one man per 2,475 square meters in World War I, to current densities of roughly one man per 40,000 square meters.<sup>11</sup> Combined arms maneuver operations could also

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<sup>9</sup>Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Pamphlet 525-3-6, 13 October 2010: *The U.S. Army Functional Concept for Movement and Maneuver 2016–2028* (Fort Monroe, Virginia: United States Training and Doctrine Command, 2010), 4.

<sup>10</sup>James M. Dubik and Gordon R. Sullivan, *Envisioning Future Warfare* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1995), 11-2.

<sup>11</sup>James J. Schneider, “Vulcan’s Anvil: The American Civil War and the Foundation of the Operational Art.” Theoretical Paper No. 4 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and

occur within urban areas. While the man to square meter calculation dramatically increases in urban terrain; structures, walls, and other barriers further isolate and distribute squads, even more than across open terrain. Wide area security operations may not feature the same tempo as combined arms maneuver, however, that does not alleviate the problem of increased dispersion. As noted in one of the case study battalions to be referenced later, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment during a January to December 2011 deployment to Afghanistan was distributed to fifty-eight remote locations across Afghanistan, and completed more than 10,000 missions as part of wide area security operations.<sup>12</sup> Other considerations such as force caps and budgetary restraints will certainly limit deployable forces. With an increasingly dispersed battle space, the squad will absorb greater areas of operation, and must be prepared to defeat the enemy, despite distance from higher headquarters or reinforcing elements.

Another expectation addressed by Training and Doctrine Command is the individuals that will compose the future threat forces. Squads will be expected to defeat an enemy who is fighting on terrain of their choosing. Colonel Jay Peterson, the assistant commandant of the Maneuver Center of Excellence's Infantry School, described the challenge to be, "Our enemy is going to look like civilians, live and operate amongst civilians, and it will use the civilian population as a weapon system against us."<sup>13</sup> With an understanding that enemy forces will likely minimize U.S. advantage in open terrain by utilizing urban areas filled with civilians as future battle zones, the squad will likely play the most important role as precision and target discretion will be required, to a degree that even smart-munitions cannot achieve. Finally, *Training and Doctrine Command*

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General Staff College, 2004), 9.

<sup>12</sup>Summer Woode, "'Iron Rangers' receive honor for courageous acts." Fort Riley, Kansas, <http://www.reiley.army.mil/NewsViewer.aspx?id=6063> (accessed November 17, 2012).

<sup>13</sup>Vincent Little, "MCoE still target 'squad' strategy." U.S. Army, <http://www.army.mil/article/84732/> (accessed November 20, 2012).

*Pamphlet 525-3-6* describes a fluid environment subject to rapid and radical change. The squad will have to be prepared to act rapidly, and potentially make decisions with strategic implications without consulting their higher headquarters.

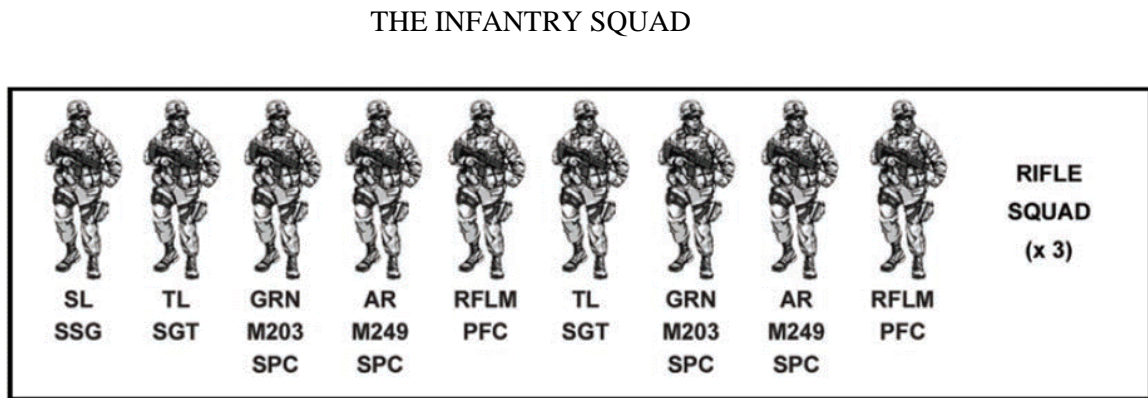


Figure 1. The Infantry Squad

*Source:* U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-21.8: *The Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad*.

The contemporary U.S. infantry squad consists of nine soldiers, and is defined doctrinally in Field Manual 3-21.8, *The Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad*.<sup>14</sup> Described as a model for all tactical task organizations, the infantry squad is comprised of two fire teams controlled by team leaders, and a squad leader controlling the two teams. The squad is “capable of establishing a base of fire, providing security for another element, or conducting fire and movement with one team providing a base of fire, while the other team moves to the next position of advantage or onto an objective.”<sup>15</sup> The primary role of the squad is to serve as a maneuver or base-of-fire

<sup>14</sup>U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-21.8: *The Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army), 1-17.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*



element.<sup>16</sup> Compared to a U.S. infantry squad in World War II, there is little difference. A World War II squad consisted of twelve soldiers, led by a squad leader who carried a M1A1 Thompson sub-machine gun. The squad navigated by use of a paper map and talked to the higher headquarters, a Platoon Leader via an FM Radio. The World War II Squad Leader controlled ten riflemen, who were armed with an M1 Garand rifle, and one automatic rifleman, who was armed with a Browning Automatic Rifle, all of which were organized into three teams.<sup>17</sup> By contrast, a rifle squad in the contemporary operating environment consists of nine soldiers, led by a squad leader who carries an M4 rifle. The squad navigates by use of a paper map and talks to its higher headquarters, a Platoon Leader via an FM Radio. As noted above, the squad leader exerts control through two team leaders armed with M4 rifles, who each control a team that consists of a grenadier, armed with an M203 Grenade Launching System attached to their M4 rifle, an automatic rifleman, armed with an M249 Squad Automatic Weapon, and a rifleman armed with an M4 rifle. While sophisticated digital capabilities such as the Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below and Blue Force Tracking systems provide a mounted squad leader digital mapping and terrain analysis capabilities, as well as digital messaging capabilities, these capabilities are lost immediately upon dismount from a vehicle. Ongoing programs exist, such as Net Warrior, that attempt to provide integration into the digital network, and would serve to provide those digital links to a dismounted squad; however they have not been fielded, and are currently undergoing testing and evaluation.

## SQUAD MODERNIZATION

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Stephen E. Hughes, "Evolution of the U.S. Army Infantry Squad: Where Do We Go From Here?" (SAMS Monograph, United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1995), 5.

The reform that led the squad design from World War II to the contemporary squad is a result of a myriad of studies, each resulting in slightly different recommendations to enhance effectiveness of the squad, and none focusing on a desired capability, rather all results being directed at composition. The modern squad has its roots in the Infantry Conference at Fort Benning in 1946, which convened to consolidate lessons learned from World War II. Though the focus was on the division, one of the conclusions was that the rifle squad almost never employed tactical maneuvers in the attack, and a recommendation was made that the rifle squad should be recognized as a single fighting unit under the command of a single leader. This recommendation would lead to a reduction from a twelve-man squad to a nine-man squad, which was deemed more effective for command and control.<sup>18</sup> Thus, it would be with a nine-man squad that the U.S. Army would fight the Korean War. In 1953, the XVIII Airborne Corps conducted an independent study called Operation Falcon, where they tested, then recommended a change to an eleven-man squad. However, the recommended changes were not implemented due to disagreement from the Infantry School, still convinced that a squad leader was unable to control an element of eleven soldiers.<sup>19</sup> In 1955, two studies were conducted. The 3rd Infantry Division conducted an exercise named Follow Me, that tested the efficacy of a seven-man squad, and determined, based on consequences of attrition, inability to control without team leaders, and lack of firepower, that a seven-man squad was too small, and instead recommended that a squad should be composed of ten men. Also in 1955, an exercise was conducted at Camp Polk, again by the 3rd Infantry Division, to test the effectiveness of the nine-man squad, and this time determined that the nine-

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<sup>18</sup>*The Infantry Conference Report of Committee on Organization*, Combined Arms Research Library Digital Library, <http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p4013coll8/id/419/rec/8> (accessed on November 14, 2012)

<sup>19</sup>Ahmed Hashim and Paul VanRiper, *Development of the Squad: Historical Analysis* (Alexandria, Virginia: Center for Naval Analysis, 2000), 29.

man squad was too small to conduct fire and maneuver, and recommended a return to a twelve-man squad organized into a weapons team and two maneuver teams.

In 1956, the U.S. Army's Combat Operations Research Group attempted an impartial evaluation to determine the balance of a squad's size, organization and weapons. This project, named A Study of the Infantry Rifle (Table of Organization and Equipment), was conducted by an external contractor, Psychological Research Associated. Results of the study with results of past studies attempted to determine what performance impacts result from changing structure, size, weapons or leadership. The study demonstrated a decrease in control as size increased, and while the optimal leader ratio was one leader to five soldiers, that sized unit would not be able to operate if it sustained casualties. Thus, the study determined that a different command structure needed to be implemented, and recommended an eleven-man squad, consisting of the squad leader, with two assistant squad leaders, who controlled four men each. The Army adopted the recommendation for an eleven-man squad, and implemented this change as part of the Reorganization of the Current Infantry Division in 1956.<sup>20</sup>

In 1961, with the pending introduction of new weapons: the M14 rifle, the M60 light machine gun, and the M79 grenade launcher, the Army Combat Development Experimentation Command sponsored the Optimum Composition of the Rifle Squad and Platoon test. This test, conducted at Fort Ord, CA, attempted to determine the best composition and disposition for a squad outfitted with the new weapons. The result was a recommendation to retain an eleven-man squad, organized with a squad leader and with each fire team given an M60 light machine gun to better execute fire and maneuver.<sup>21</sup> Concern by the Infantry Commandant over the findings of the Optimum Composition of the Rifle Squad and Platoon test, the United States Army Infantry

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 32.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 34

School conducted the Rifle Squad and Platoon Evaluation Program at Fort Benning later in 1961. This study concluded that the rifle squad should consist of ten-men, though augmented to eleven when operating from an armored personnel carrier. Additional findings were that the M60 machine gun should not be organic to the rifle squad, the fire teams did not need to be balanced, and all squads should habitually be supplied with the M72 Light Anti-Tank Weapon.<sup>22</sup> In 1964 the Army conducted the Reorganization of the Army Division Study, which recommended a reduction in squad size to ten-men, primarily in an attempt to economize personnel in the Division, and used increased lethality from new weapons as justification.<sup>23</sup>

From 1967 to 1972, Combat Developments Command conducted The Infantry Rifle Unit Study. Characterized as the most comprehensive and scientific study to date conducted on the infantry squad and platoon, this study established objective and measurable criteria for evaluation, and used electronic devices to extrapolate data from field exercises. Focus revolved around manning configurations, with tests conducted with squads ranging from seven to sixteen men. The study highlighted the importance of the light machine gun to small unit effectiveness, though noted that while firepower is important, more machine guns do not necessarily increase effectiveness. After six years of study, recommendations were submitted regarding manning, communications and weapons systems. Testing with squad sizes at thirteen, eleven, and nine men proved the most effective, however the eventual recommendation was that the mechanized rifle squad should consist of eleven men, two men for the crew, and nine for the dismounted

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<sup>22</sup>United States Army Infantry School, "Rifle Squad and Platoon Evaluation Program 22 May 61 – 31 July 61." Defense Technical Information Center. <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a074296.pdf> (accessed on November 14, 2012)

<sup>23</sup> Ahmed Hashim and Paul VanRiper, *Development of the Squad: Historical Analysis* (Alexandria, Virginia: Center for Naval Analysis, 2000), 41.

element.<sup>24</sup> Analysis also focused on the effectiveness of providing radios in various quantities to members of the squad and determining any degraded performance with the distraction associated with carrying a communications device. While some degradation was realized, the final recommendation was that the Army should provide communication capability to team leader level.<sup>25</sup> Additional recommendations resulted from study of capacity and capability based on distribution of machine guns. A light machine gun, the Stoner 63A, proved a valuable squad level asset, however the lack of capacity to field the system to the force drove the study to an alternative recommendation for each fire team to maintain a heavier M60 machine gun to ensure fire superiority.<sup>26</sup> These recommendations led to changes by the Army in 1973, with the notable shift of squad size from nine to eleven men.

This change in squad size was quickly challenged with the results of the Division Restructuring Study, conducted in 1976 by Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) in an attempt to formalize the base Army unit before adjusting larger formations to meet the Warsaw Pact challenge.<sup>27</sup> The final recommendation of the study was a return to a nine-man squad, which was then supported by the results of the Division 86 Study, conducted from 1978-80. In the Division 86 Study, results were largely based on factors related to the newly introduced Bradley

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<sup>24</sup>James E. Rainey, "Sharpening the Tip of the Spear: Is the Light Infantry Squad the Right Size for the Future Battlefield?" (SAMS Monograph, United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1999), 19.

<sup>25</sup>Stephen E. Hughes, "Evolution of the U.S. Army Infantry Squad: Where Do We Go From Here?" (SAMS Monograph, United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1995), 18.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>27</sup> *Combat Studies Institute Report Number 14, Sixty Years of Reorganizing for Combat: A Historical Trend Analysis* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1999), 37.

Infantry Fighting Vehicle that could only transport nine soldiers.<sup>28</sup> Vehicle restrictions resulted in a seven-man dismounted element, with the driver and gunner remaining with the vehicle, and unsurprisingly the recommendations for squad size matched vehicle capacity. Differing squad sizes resulted based on the type of infantry organization – mechanized squads were recommended to be ten men, while non-mechanized units would remain at eleven men.

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed continued turbulence in attempting to optimize squad organization. In response to concerns raised at the 1983 Army Commanders Conference regarding a hollow force, the Fort Leavenworth Combined Arms Center conducted the Army of Excellence study to assess the capacity of the overall force to meet manning requirements. Citing a demand to standardize the infantry across all division structures, the fact that the Bradley Fighting Vehicle was designed for a nine-man squad, and to effect personnel savings which could be used to offset the army shortfall in personnel authorizations, recommendations resulted to reduce rifle squads to nine men.<sup>29</sup> The implementation of the nine-man squad occurred in 1984, and was accompanied with the introduction of the M249 Squad Automatic Weapon, a light machine gun, meeting the need identified by the Infantry Rifle Unit Study. Additionally, a new radio, the AN/PRC-68, was introduced at the platoon level which allowed more reliable communication between the Squad Leader and the Platoon Leader, however, the communication capacity did not get fielded to Team Leaders. Finally, key leaders in the squad were equipped with night vision goggles, which enhanced capacity for combat operations at night.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Stephen E. Hughes, “Evolution of the U.S. Army Infantry Squad: Where Do We Go From Here?” (SAMS Monograph, United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1995), 20.

<sup>29</sup> John W. Wild, “The Army of Excellence: How Ready?” (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, 1987), 10.

<sup>30</sup>Stephen E. Hughes, “Evolution of the U.S. Army Infantry Squad: Where Do We Go From Here?” (SAMS Monograph, United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort

Despite seemingly having achieved force structure success with the Gulf War victory, advances in information technology and an expectation for a diverse range of mission requirements led to the initiation of Force XXI from 1993–7. This concept was intended to redesign the army structure to “digitize” units allowing shared situational awareness, and would allow commanders to make rapid, accurate tactical decisions.<sup>31</sup> Simply put, commanders could see in real-time, where their units were on a digital map, and arrange those units to more effectively conduct operations. Amidst this backdrop, the Infantry Center conducted at least two additional studies in 1994, with recommendations for a ten man squad, divided into three fire teams in one study, and a nine-man squad with a five-man machine gun section in the platoon in another study. However, the studies were conducted focused on manning related to vehicle configuration rather than on the actual dismounted element.<sup>32</sup> During Force XXI, digitization was primarily down to individual vehicle level, while developing technology was not yet able to add infantry squads or individual infantrymen to the digital map. The expectation was that the vehicle commander or gunner maintained awareness of the dismounted squad that habitually associated with their vehicle.

In the late 1990s the Army was composed of heavy and light forces, and the identified need for a medium weight force led to the development of the Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT), which was conceived of as an “infantry-centric” organization. The Infantry Carrier Variant of the Stryker vehicle, the primary vehicle in a Stryker Brigade, was designed to carry

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Leavenworth, Kansas, 1995), 22.

<sup>31</sup> *Combat Studies Institute Report Number 14, Sixty Years of Reorganizing for Combat: A Historical Trend Analysis*. (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1999), 55

<sup>32</sup> John G. Norris, “The Force XXI Mechanized Infantry Platoon: Will it be an Effective Organization?” MMAS Thesis, United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1999), 3.

nine soldiers along with a driver and gunner. With more space inside the vehicle, squad capacity and capability increased as squads could carry gear in the vehicle, and tailor their load before dismounting. This “rolling arms room” concept increased squad lethality, as access to weapons systems that would have been too heavy to carry on long-duration missions existed in the vehicle that brought the squad to the battlefield.

One of the most prolific advantages an SBCT maintained over other formations was the digital systems organic to the brigade, which were doctrinally established to ensure a more rapid process of achieving situational understanding, and then allowing a commander to reposition forces to make contact with an enemy at a time and place of his choosing.<sup>33</sup> Thanks to the Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below (FBCB2) System that was installed in each infantry carrier vehicle, the rifle squad was able to have access to real time enemy information, and able to rapidly move to the fight. This new system was not significantly different than the Force XXI systems in that they showed units on a digital map and infantry squads lost contact with the information once they were dismounted. However, reliance on digital systems and the obvious benefit from enhanced understanding provided through the FBCB2, allowed for the introduction of a soldier level system, called the Land Warrior, to be which was finally fielded to an SBCT infantry battalion in 2005.<sup>34</sup> The Land Warrior system’s purpose was to display individual soldier locations on a photo-realistic map, and as they were linked together, display other soldiers’ locations as well to allow company and platoon level leaders to maintain situational

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<sup>33</sup>Adam L. Roche, “Is the Stryker Brigade Combat Team a Viable Concept?” (MMAS Thesis, United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 2003), 48.

<sup>34</sup>Marcus B. Griffith, “Land Warrior in Combat.” (Personal Experience Paper, United States Army Sergeant Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas, 2010), 4.



understanding while dismounted.<sup>35</sup> While not every soldier wore the system, it enhanced squad capability, and was proven effective during a combat deployment to Iraq in 2007. The Land Warrior program was canceled, however, its successor, the Ground Soldier System, then renamed the Nett Warrior System, continues to advance the concept of networking the dismounted squad and individual infantryman into the digital network.

Optimizing squad composition in attempts to increase capability has also been the focus of much academic work. In a School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) monograph, Major Paul Melody conducted a study of the squad in 1990, and recommended removing one M249 Squad Automatic Weapon and one M203 Grenade Launcher in each infantry squad to “give the company commander the human resources to accomplish a variety of tasks only dismounted infantry can perform.”<sup>36</sup> In the 1994–5 academic year, Major Stephen Hughes, also a SAMS student, focused on optimization of the infantry squad, and recommended the squad be reorganized into a 10-man formation composing of three fire teams.<sup>37</sup> These studies, much like the Army directed studies of the past, remained focused on composition as opposed to capability, and continued traditional modernization recommendations as opposed to any unique change to the concept of squad employment or development.

Since the end of World War II and the 1946 Infantry Conference, the focus on infantry squad modernization has traditionally been on adjusting the composition of the rifle squad. The fielding of new weapons, radios, and command and control systems was constantly assessed and

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid, 5.

<sup>36</sup>Paul E. Melody, “The Infantry Rifle Squad: Size is Not the Only Problem.” (SAMS Monograph, United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1990), 45.

<sup>37</sup>Stephen E. Hughes, “Evolution of the U.S. Army Infantry Squad: Where Do We Go From Here?” SAMS Monograph, United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1995), 38.

refined, all focused on increasing individual systems and adjusting manning as opposed to developing capabilities of the whole squad and organizing a formation starting at the top and going down — as opposed to establishing base capabilities and building up. The conflicting desire of balancing a squad that is small enough to be controlled by one leader, but large enough to remain combat effective after the loss of one of its members was of primary importance to the constant manning adjustments. Likewise, the desire to increase lethality by fielding increasingly more powerful weapons systems, like the M60 machine gun in the 1970s and the M249 Squad Automatic Weapon in the 1980s, needed to be balanced against concerns regarding squad mobility and reach. The modernization of communications systems, first with radios then being brought into the network and “digitized” with the development for Force XXI and the SBCT, increased situational understanding for leadership above the squad, however, has not enhanced intra-squad capabilities. Finally, many of the adjustments to manning were more a result of adjustments to larger formations as opposed to maximizing the squad composition itself. The Army of Excellence design was based on a desire to achieve a certain manning quota across the force, and the 1976 Division Restructuring Study made recommendations based on the Division and the carrying capacity of the Bradley Fighting Vehicle, as opposed to any true squad level considerations.

Missing from all these studies was an attempt to develop capability based on improving cognitive skills of the individuals who make up the squad, or to increase capacity through enhanced training of the human dimension. As General DuPuy noted in his 1958 article, when in combat, a squad leader must decide on a course of action to achieve his objectives, and then organize his squad around a jointly held image of this course of action in sufficient detail to provide adequate instructions for each squad member.<sup>38</sup> These important tasks must be

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<sup>38</sup>Richard M. Swain, *Selected Papers of General William E. DePuy: First Commander*,

accomplished under extremely adverse conditions, and likely, developing the capability of the leader and members of an infantry squad as opposed to adjusting composition is a better method to increasing squad capacity, and is an appropriate technique to achieving overmatch.

## CASE STUDIES IN OVERMATCH

Contemporary examples of squad sized units illustrate that capability, as opposed to composition, allows squads to achieve overmatch. Examination of squad sized elements in both combined arms maneuver and wide area security missions in the contemporary operating environment indicate the plausibility of squad reform and the ability to enable that level with overmatch. A combined arms maneuver operation applies the elements of combat power in unified action, to defeat enemy ground forces, and achieve a position of advantage over an enemy.<sup>39</sup> Wide area security is an operation that applies the elements of combat power in unified action to protect populations, forces, infrastructure and activities; to deny the enemy positions of advantage and to consolidate gains in order to retain the initiative.<sup>40</sup> These two core Army core competencies, or methods of balancing the application of the elements of combat power within tactical actions and tasks associated with offense, defense, and stability actions,<sup>41</sup> represent the methods a squad can contribute to decisive action while conducting unified land operations.

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*US Army, Training and Doctrine Command, 1 July 1973.* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1994), 18.

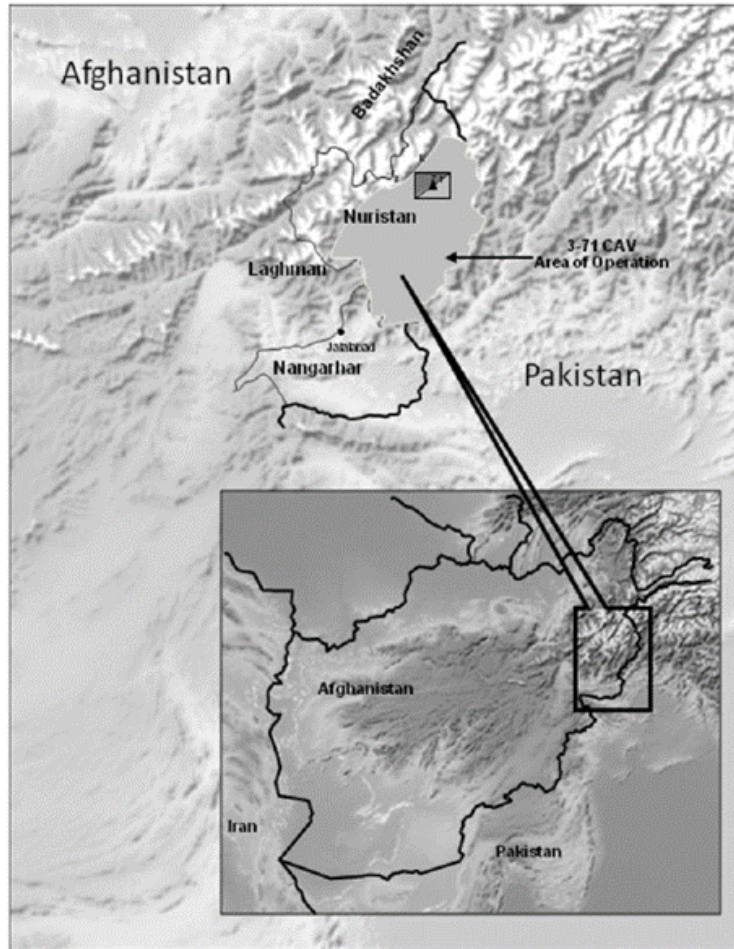
<sup>39</sup>U.S. Department of the Army. Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*. (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2011), 6.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*

### Kill Team Case Study

The first case study is an example of squad overmatch in a combined arms maneuver operation, and focuses on a squad sized Kill Team from Task Force Titan – 3d Squadron, 71st



Cavalry Regiment (3-71 CAV) of the 3d Brigade Combat Team (BCT), 10th Mountain Division.

The case study comes from an article by Lieutenant Colonel John C. Mountcastle, “Firefight Above Gowardesh” in *Vanguard of Valor (Small Unit Actions in Afghanistan)* published by the Combat Studies Institute.

Figure 2. 10th Mountain Division Kill Team Reference Map

Source: Donald P. Wright, ed., *Vanguard of Valor Small Unit Actions in Afghanistan*.

Task Force Titan had been operating out of Forward Operating Base (FOB) Naray, in northeastern Afghanistan – the most northern FOB in Afghanistan. Titan’s higher headquarters, Combined Joint Task Force 76 (CJTF-76), consisting largely of leadership from the 10th Mountain Division, had found success in June 2006, conducting Operation Mountain Lion, using the “clear-hold-build-engage” technique to establish control in the challenging terrain of Nuristan and Kunar Provinces.<sup>42</sup> Hoping to build on Operation Mountain Lion’s success, Combined Joint Task Force 76 planned a follow on operation in late June 2006 named Operation Mountain Thrust, to destroy remaining centers of enemy activity in northeastern Afghanistan. Task Force Titan would be the main effort unit of the operation, and was ordered to clear the Gremen Valley (also known as the Gowardesh Valley) of enemy forces.<sup>43</sup> The Squadron’s plan was to clear the valley with two company-sized units, however, first needed to establish surveillance on target areas prior to initiation of operations to further develop understanding of the enemy intent and disposition.<sup>44</sup> Their operation was named Operation Gowardesh Thrust.

Based on a technique developed during Operation Mountain Lion, the squadron created a squad-like, 16-man formation, with enhanced observation, fire direction, and security capabilities that they referred to as a “kill team.”<sup>45</sup> The kill team consisted of a Combat Observation and Lasing Team (COLT) section and a sniper section. A COLT section usually consists of three enlisted personnel, and serves as an observer team capable of day and night target acquisition, takes advantage of laser-range finding and laser-designating capabilities, and directs fire on

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<sup>42</sup>Donald P. Wright, ed., *Vanguard of Valor Small Unit Actions in Afghanistan* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2012), 1.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, 4.

targets using any munitions that require reflected laser energy for final ballistic guidance.<sup>46</sup> A sniper section, usually consisting of ten enlisted personnel, is able to deliver precise, long-range fire on selected targets and has a secondary mission of collecting and reporting on battlefield information.<sup>47</sup> They are usually organized into three, three-man teams, and are highly trained using their specific weapons systems. The combined sections could be considered highly trained infantry forces, with skills to employ unique capabilities.

The squadron operations officer characterized the element as “tactically flexible” and able to “maximize capabilities” of the squadron and be able to defend itself against an enemy attack. Additionally, the individual soldiers selected to create the kill team were hand-picked and described by the operations officer as “the most skilled... the best in the organization.”<sup>48</sup> The kill team was led by two non-commissioned officers, Staff Sergeant Christopher Cunningham, who oversaw the sniper section, and the kill team leader, Staff Sergeant Jared Monti, a section leader from the squadron’s COLT platoon.<sup>49</sup>

It is important to note that this description of the composition of the kill team reflects an ability for the unit to achieve overmatch. The COLT team provided capability to deliver precise indirect fire on identified targets, and assuredly had access to the fire support network which would allow them overwhelming fire support if called. The sniper section provided both observation and target identification capabilities, and was outfitted with weapons systems that

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<sup>46</sup>U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-90.6, *Brigade Combat Team* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2010), 7-4.

<sup>47</sup>U.S. Department of the Army. Field Manual (FM) 3-21.8, *The Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad*. (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army. 2007), G-2.

<sup>48</sup>Donald P. Wright, ed., *Vanguard of Valor Small Unit Actions in Afghanistan* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2012), 4.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*

would provide standoff from individual enemy soldiers. As these soldiers were described as “the best in the organization,” they were likely highly trained and proficient at their individual soldier skills, and individually motivated. This kill team would be operating in a decentralized mode, dismounted and beyond the standard distance for dismounted element in the given terrain.

The planned date for execution of Operation Gowardesh Thrust was 21 June 2006. This would require the kill team to infiltrate to their observation post four days earlier, on 18 June 2006. They would establish an observation post on Mountain 2610, along the western wall of the Gremen Valley, and observe Named Areas of Interest, then observe and destroy any enemy forces attempting to flee the valley.<sup>50</sup> The ascent to the observation post was a challenge, as each member of the team was carrying 50 pounds of equipment, and the steep terrain required frequent rest stops and planned movement during the night.<sup>51</sup> Upon arrival to the point predetermined to be the observation post, it was apparent that it straddled a well-traveled foot path, which posed a problem for long term security of the element, and caused the unit to question the actual use of the site. However the tactical hesitation on the selection of the site was tempered with the knowledge that the team would only be there a short time.

Unfortunately, notification came early in the morning on 21 June 2006, the expected start date of Operation Gowardesh Thrust, that the operation was delayed three days, which would require a resupply of food and water to the team, who would also have to remain unobserved for that extended time period. Critical coordination with the pilot who flew the resupply mission was confused, and the resupply helicopter announced the kill team’s position when it first flew over the structures that were being observed, then hovered over the team to deliver the supplies, rather than approach from a different azimuth and drop the resupply bags without stopping as the

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 7.

squadron staff had requested.<sup>52</sup> The kill team's location was compromised, as an Afghan male looking at the observation post with binoculars was observed by a soldier on security. Though they knew they had been compromised, the options of attempting to move only to get ambushed on the way to their new location, or moving down the mountain only to cede the high ground to the enemy, were less preferable to staying at the observation post, and continuing to observe the targeted areas.

At 1845 hours on 21 June 2006, the team was engaged by roughly fifty enemy fighters, armed with both rifles and rocket propelled grenades, who attempted to flank the observation post. The enemy fighters had established firing positions to their north and northwest, and within the first few minutes of the attack, the kill team suffered two wounded soldiers, one in critical condition who was laying out in the open, and one soldier killed. Upon forming a perimeter in a more easily defensible location, Staff Sergeant Monti initiated a call for fire, which assisted, but did not greatly help the kill team that was now fighting the enemy from three directions.<sup>53</sup> Unfortunately, Staff Sergeant Monti was killed shortly thereafter attempting to save a wounded member of the team. A B-1 bomber arrived as dark was falling, and was able to deliver highly accurate Joint Direct Attack Munitions, which were further augmented by the ongoing artillery and mortar rounds that continued to be fired in support of the kill team.

The firefight had lasted roughly sixty minutes, and the 16-man element is estimated to have killed twenty-six enemy fighters, and wounded another seventeen.<sup>54</sup> Unfortunately, an accident during an aerial medical evacuation caused the death of two more members of the kill team, bringing the number of total deaths to four. Fearful of sending another helicopter to

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 10.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 16.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 18.



evacuate the squad, the remaining members of the kill team conducted a dismounted movement and withdrew from their observation post, and returned to Forward Operating Base Naray on 22 June 2006. Task Force Titan would conduct their operation into the Gremen Valley on 24 June 2006, and would eventually establish a combat outpost near the observation post location. Promoted posthumously, Sergeant First Class Jared C. Monti would also be posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions under fire that day, a testament to the heroism and valor demonstrated by a model Army leader.<sup>55</sup> The Kill Team had been able to achieve the objective of observing the named areas of intelligence, destroy a significant enemy force, and as they were required to execute a withdrawal, they demonstrated capability to plan, execute and support a further mission. The squad-sized element had achieved overmatch, primarily due to expert leadership and soldier resiliency, but also through the link to the fire support network.

#### First Squad Case Study

The prospect of achieving overmatch is easily conceivable for combined arms maneuver when enabled with assets such as fire support, but future conflict will likely not always require a heavy hand, and rifle squads will be expected to thrive in a wide area security environment as well. The second case study, demonstrating squad level overmatch in wide area security operations, focuses on 1st Squad, 4th Platoon, Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment (1-16 IN) “Iron Rangers”, 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division as described by Scott J. Gaitley in his article “Securing Dat Patan: A US Infantry Squad’s Counterinsurgency Program in an Afghan Village” in *Vanguard of Valor Volume II (Small Unit Actions in Afghanistan)* published by the Combat Studies Institute.<sup>56</sup> In May 2009, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 1.

<sup>56</sup>Donald P. Wright, ed., *Vanguard of Valor Small Unit Actions in Afghanistan Volume II* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2012), 125.

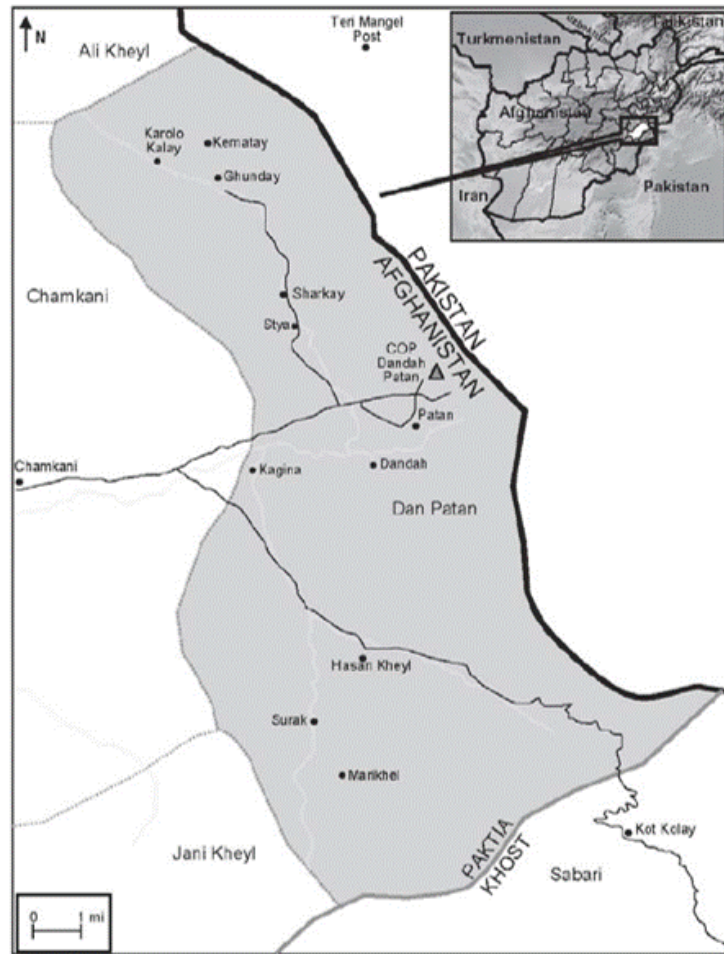


Figure 3. 1st Infantry Division Village Stability Operations Reference Map

Source: Donald P. Wright, ed., *Vanguard of Valor Small Unit Actions in Afghanistan Volume II*.

was restructured from a unit training Foreign Service personnel and advisor teams to a heavy brigade combat team element, preparing for a deployment to Iraq in September 2010. Twenty days prior to departure, the orders were changed, and the unit was tasked with a mission to

conduct Village Stability Operations with the Afghan Local Police.<sup>57</sup> Village Stability Operations was a program that originated with United States special operations forces, where a small team would establish security in key villages, enable economic development, and promote governance from the village level up through the district and province governments.<sup>58</sup> This grass roots effort was increasingly successful as it was grounded in a tradition of rural Afghan villages providing basic self-defense and community security, with the support of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The Village Stability Operations initiative developed through four phases: shape, hold, build, and transition.<sup>59</sup> During the shape phase, U.S. forces conducted assessments and established a small U.S. base within the village. The U.S. soldiers and the villages developed rapport and trust during this phase that typically could take about three months. The hold phase was focused on protecting the village and setting the conditions for the build phase which linked villages to district and provincial government through institutional arrangements, such as district and provincial *shuras*, or meetings, and expenditure of Commanders Emergency Response Program funds.<sup>60</sup> Lastly, the transition phase expanded the stability to other areas in the district, while transitioning responsibility for security, development, and governance to the Afghan government.<sup>61</sup> To expand village security, Afghan Local Police were established in villages, especially villages in remote locations, to provide protection in communities that lacked Afghan National Security Forces. The Afghan Local Police were not as professional as either Afghan National Security Forces or Afghan National Police, however,

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 129.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 126.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 129.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

based on the expanding need for security, it was important to integrate those forces with other security forces. The program expanded beyond the capacity of either U.S. Special Operations Forces or Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to control, thus, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment was assigned under operational control of Special Operations Forces to assist in the expansion of Village Stability Operations and integration of the Afghan Local Police.<sup>62</sup>

When the battalion deployed to Afghanistan on 15 January 2011, the unit had forces distributed to fifty-two different sites. First Squad, 4th Platoon, Alpha Company was led by Staff Sergeant Shawn Goggins, with Sergeant Kenneth Eunice and Sergeant John Friedman assigned as his team leaders.<sup>63</sup> Staff Sergeant Goggins was characterized by Gaitley as the “epitome of an Army infantry leader,” and by his Company First Sergeant, First Sergeant Danny R. Conley, as the most stellar soldier in the brigade. Goggins had been the honor graduate of the Warrior Leader Course, and had a Bachelor’s Degree in Criminal Justice.<sup>64</sup> Goggins was physically fit, and “regularly achieved perfect scores on the Army physical fitness test.”<sup>65</sup>

First Squad arrived in Afghanistan in January 2011, and spent 30-days receiving specific Village Stabilization Operations training from Special Operations forces before departing for their assigned villages. First Squad moved to Combat Outpost (COP) Dandah Patan, where they joined members of 20th Special Forces Group, and became responsible for village stability and local police training in the villages of Dandah and Patan, which were technically two separate villages separated by a stream, but were considered by the Afghans as one collective location.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 130.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 131.

The village of Dandah Patan was critical for the International Security Assistance Force based on the proximity to a well-known arms bazaar roughly 20 kilometers north of the villages, but inside The Islamic Republic of Pakistan.<sup>67</sup> The proximity and terrain had naturally supported a supply line near the village, and the Village Stability Operations had been designed to force insurgents to move their supply lines further south into less hospitable terrain, which would increase difficulty for insurgents to transport supplies.<sup>68</sup>

First Squad arrived at COP Dandah Patan with Special Forces having already completed the shape phase, and the squad would be integrated in the hold phase. The squad immediately began assisting in providing security during village key leader engagements, assisting in the training of Afghan Local Police personnel, and visiting neighboring villages roughly twice a week.<sup>69</sup> The squad reinforced the COP by forming a mortar team that could provide effective indirect fire in the district, and over time, would completely assume the village stability operation mission completely from the Special Forces team. SSG Goggins wrote the program of instruction for training the Afghan Local Police, assigned Sergeant Eunice to assume duties as the pay agent, and assigned Sergeant Friedman as the primary instructor for the rifle range and marksmanship program. Other members of the squad were given specific duties, such as Specialist Gener Larue, who would routinely travel to FOB Gardez to collect weapons and ammunition for the Afghan Local Police training course. Other members assumed duties as primary trainer for communications, medical assistance, and vehicle maintenance to the Afghan forces.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 132.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 134.

The success in the Village Stability Operations / Afghan Local Police program was not uniform across the battalion. In fact, of the twenty-five villages the program was introduced to, only the three villages First Squad administered to were truly successful.<sup>71</sup> However, First Squad found great success in their capacity, which allowed the Special Forces team the opportunity to begin shaping operations in other key villages. Payment programs and refresher training sessions on common tasks were initiated, and eventually Afghan Local Police who were trained by First Squad could accompany Special Forces teams to conduct shaping operations together, greatly enhancing the probability for success as the indigenous forces added validity to other villages who were leery of U.S. military forces.<sup>72</sup> When First Squad eventually rotated out of Afghanistan in December 2011, the villages that were secured and trained by the squad truly were able to take initiative to protect their own populations from insurgents.

#### SQUAD OVERMATCH AND UNIFIED LAND OPERATIONS

The two case studies indicate the capacity for a squad sized unit to achieve overmatch, primarily gained through metrics related to the human dimension, as opposed to any specific composition adjustment to the unit. Leadership, as demonstrated by SFC Monti and SSG Goggins, was decisive in the success of the units, and this dimension offers the greatest opportunity for achieving overmatch as opposed to any manning or equipment adjustment. A squad enabled with overmatch would be the most valuable contributor to conducting unified land operations, a concept built on the tenets of flexibility, integration, lethality, adaptability, depth, and synchronization. When the case studies are analyzed according to these tenets of unified land operations, or the Army's approach to generating and applying combat power in campaigns and

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 141.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 137.

operations,<sup>73</sup> it becomes apparent that the human dimension enhances the ability of a small unit to successfully execute critical tasks against projected threat forces across the operational spectrum, ultimately defeating the adversary, accomplishing operational objectives, and retaining capability to plan, execute, and support further missions, or achieve overmatch.

Flexibility, the first tenet of unified land operations, is facilitated through mission command which fosters individual initiative, and demands rapid action across the range of military operations. Squad leader and small unit flexibility was illustrated by SSG Goggins and First Squad when their mission changed from Iraq to Afghanistan, then were able to successfully operate with special operations forces conducting a mission they were not traditionally trained for. As observed by Gaitley, “First Squad and [special operations] Soldiers worked harmoniously. Other squads from [the same battalion] were not so fortunate, enduring caustic relations with their Special Forces counterparts.”<sup>74</sup> SFC Monti and the kill team also demonstrated flexibility when combining two non-standard units performing a longer duration mission than was traditionally expected. The skills, experience, and reputation of the leaders mitigated the risk associated with the operation, and the capacity to adjust to their unique operation demonstrates the impact that the human dimension has on this first tenet.

Integration is the second tenet. Army forces do not operate independently, but as part of a larger joint, interagency, and frequently multinational effort. Certainly this trend will continue in future operations. Army leaders are responsible for integrating Army operations within this larger effort.<sup>75</sup> Again, the human dimension is critical for integrating units into parent organizations.

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<sup>73</sup>U.S. Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2011), 7.

<sup>74</sup>Donald P. Wright, ed., *Vanguard of Valor Small Unit Actions in Afghanistan Volume II* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2012), 132.

<sup>75</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Unified Land*

Again, with regard to First Squad, Gaitley noted that “Sergeant Goggins’ management style, skills, and techniques enabled effective communication and organization, while his demeanor encouraged positive relationships between his Soldiers and the members of the Special Forces Team.”<sup>76</sup> The leadership of the kill team, both SFC Monti and SSG Cunningham, the leader of the sniper section, were able to first integrate their two units together to form one cohesive organization, but were then able to integrate the newly established formation into the overall concept of Operation Gowardesh Thrust.

The third tenet of Army unified land operations is lethality, or the capacity for physical destruction. This tenet is fundamental to all other military capabilities and the most basic building block for military operations.<sup>77</sup> The concept of overmatch implies some sort of enhanced lethality, and certainly as technology develops, increasingly lethal equipment will be fielded to infantry forces. However, the human dimension’s impact on lethality lies in the leader’s understanding of the systems a unit is given. The leader is responsible for training and then application of the specific system, and as the kill team demonstrates, specific skills, such as those for directing indirect fires that traditionally are associated with a COLT section, complement those of a sniper section to greatly enhance the lethality of the formation. It is the enhanced capability, vice composition, that increased lethality in this instance. While physical destruction is a persistent requirement for Army organizations, conditions such as wide area security operations, exist where only the implicit threat of violence suffices to accomplish a mission through nonlethal

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*Operations* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2011), 7.

<sup>76</sup>Donald P. Wright, ed., *Vanguard of Valor Small Unit Actions in Afghanistan Volume II* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2012), 133.

<sup>77</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2011), 7.



engagements and activities.<sup>78</sup> In these instances, the capability for the understanding of when to lawfully and expertly apply lethal force is of paramount importance to the success of a mission. Obviously, this concept was clearly understood by SSG Goggins, as the solution for problems in Dandah Patan was not simply the application of physical destruction.

Adaptability will assuredly be required on future battlefields, as it requires understanding of the uniqueness of the operational environment.<sup>79</sup> Leaders will be required to adapt their thinking, their formations, and their employment techniques to the specific situation they face. Mountcastle noted that the kill team mission was not overly complex: climb a mountain, establish an observation post, monitor the action below, and call for fires if necessary.<sup>80</sup> However the complexity increased with a sub-optimal observation location, casualties, a medical evacuation accident causing further casualties, and then the requirement to withdraw on foot as opposed to the original plan. Despite this increased complexity, the small unit was able to adapt to the conditions as they developed, and successfully complete their mission. First Squad required adaptability in the change of operational environment very early when ordered to Afghanistan, though all training had been for Iraq. Then the squad embracing the village stability operation as opposed to any standard combat mission demonstrated understanding of the requirements to achieve a position of advantage, and this concept, fostered in the human dimension, is critical for adaptability.

Depth, the fifth tenet, or the extension of operations in space, time, or purpose, will also be a consideration on the future battlefield. Striking enemy forces throughout their depth is

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 7–8.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., 8.

<sup>80</sup> Donald P. Wright, ed., *Vanguard of Valor Small Unit Actions in Afghanistan* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2012), 4.

accomplished by leaders who arrange their activities across the entire operational framework to achieve the most decisive result.<sup>81</sup> As noted in Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 525-3-6, *The United States Army Functional Concept for Movement and Maneuver 2016–2028*, the battle space will be distributed, and the squad will be required to cover a much greater area than traditionally expected. Developing the human dimension to appreciate the role of small units in this environment is critical, and was demonstrated successfully by First Squad and SFC Monti who were one squad of fifty-two distributed units across the battalion's area of operations. Tactical depth was demonstrated by the kill team, who had to move dismounted up a ridgeline, carrying in excess of fifty pounds of equipment, for three miles. Montcastle noted the terrain in northwestern Afghanistan was so treacherous that the brigade had suffered significant Soldier injuries and even deaths from falls in the mountains.<sup>82</sup> In such terrain, similar to restrictions in urban environments, squad sized units will be the only ones that will be able to navigate across. Thus training, and developing the human dimension are essential for achieving both tactical and operational depth in similar, and expected, operational environments.

Synchronization, the sixth and final tenet, is the arrangement of military actions in time, space, and purpose to produce maximum relative combat power at a decisive place and time. At the tactical level, where an infantry squad operates, the synchronization of intelligence collection, obstacles, direct fires, and indirect fires leads to the destruction of an enemy force.<sup>83</sup> The kill team demonstrates tactical synchronization through the combination of snipers and a COLT element,

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<sup>81</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2011), 8.

<sup>82</sup> Donald P. Wright, ed., *Vanguard of Valor Small Unit Actions in Afghanistan* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2012), 7.

<sup>83</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2011), 9.

which is able to accomplish all the required synchronization tasks. The capability organic to that squad-sized element contributes directly to obtaining overmatch over a threat force, and the human dimension allows for the unit to achieve the specific expertise, as well as successfully employ the methods in synchronization. First Squad contributed to operational synchronization, as it conducted specific tasks simultaneously with other units at a unique location, which overall for the battalion and the brigade, produced greater effects than each sub-element executing each task in isolation.<sup>84</sup>

As indicated by the two case studies of squad-sized organizations, enabling a squad with overmatch, through development of the human dimension, is not only plausible but critical to future success of the Army. The rifle squad can contribute to both tactical and operational level success, though focus must be directed at developing capability, initially through development of the human dimension, which will most effectively lead to overmatch. It is not surprising that in both case studies the Squad Leaders are described as being “the best,” and it is not unrealistic to believe that focusing on the human dimension will result in all Squad Leaders exhibiting similar qualities to those of SFC Monti and SSG Goggins. There are, of course, composition enhancements that should contribute to overmatch as well, though their successful integration will rely on developing the human dimension first.

#### COMPOSITION AUGMENTS CAPABILITY

As LTG Brown notes in his article, “The Infantry Squad: Decisive Force Now and in the Future,” getting rifle squads integrated into the digital network, then outfitting them with mission command focused tools is the next critical step in establishing overmatch.<sup>85</sup> Based on a

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<sup>84</sup>U.S. Department of the Army. Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*. (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2011), 9.

<sup>85</sup>Robert Brown. “The Infantry Squad: Decisive Force Now and in the Future.” *Military*

recognition that the contemporary environment forces the fight at the dismounted level, and the pivotal role the squad would face in future military success, Brown's focus, while Commander of the Maneuver Center of Excellence at Fort Benning, was on enabling overmatch through a combination of improvements to network, mobility, protection, lethality, power generation, training, and leader development at the squad level. The identified critical needs for a squad to achieve overmatch were for it to be networked, have enhanced mobility, have enhanced force projection, be outfitted with improved power and energy capabilities, use joint fires and direct fires for increased lethality, and finally, greater focus on the human dimension, specifically training and leader development. Prioritization will be crucial in the near term for a force facing reduced budgets, and building squads with the necessary skills and confidence in abilities is important for establishing capability, then building on the capability with adjustments to composition. Brown recommends in the article that the best way to ensure that the Army accomplishes the directive of enabling a squad with overmatch, is through a consolidation of the current 466 programs that deal with improving some aspect of the squad, and treating the squad as a system during the acquisition process, in the same way that the force treats larger systems such as the Joint Strike Fighter, the littoral combat ship, or the Ford-class aircraft carrier.<sup>86</sup> This method to enhance composition will augment the focus on capability that will come from focusing on the human dimension.

## CONCLUSION

Past modernization attempts aimed at enhancing capacity of the rifle squad have focused on composition — solely directed at adjusting the manning or fielding new equipment. A better

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*Review* 91, no. 6 (2011), 4.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

way to develop capacity is to focus on capability, or on developing the squad as a unit, focusing on the human dimension, specifically training and leader development. General William DePuy noted, in the March 1958 issue of *Army* that “you can’t see an infantry squad — it is an idea that exists only when jointly held by its members.”<sup>87</sup> The reliance on the training, experience, and leadership, or the human dimension that General DePuy was referring to is the building block for establishing overmatch at the infantry squad level. This will ultimately establish the basic element to build the rest of the force. This bottom-up approach is exactly what General Dempsey envisioned when he outlined his priorities, and it is likely that future conflict will depend on small units who are capable of success in both combined arms maneuver and wide area security missions. Assuredly, composition developments will come with the arrival of new technology, and will be important to ensuring that the squad can contribute to enhancing the operational and strategic commander’s situational understanding with their networked information sharing. However, these composition developments will rely on implementation developed by enhanced capability, which are founded on development of the human dimension. As then-President Eisenhower wrote in a letter to Joseph L. Collins, “There has been much talk of air and sea winning a war, etc. — I honestly believe that, if we view the future with naked eyes, and reject all wishful thinking, we will find that the training, indoctrination, conditioning, equipping, and readying of our ground forces is possibly going to be an even more important thing in any future war than in the past.”<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup>Richard M. Swain, *Selected Papers of General William E. DePuy: First Commander, US Army, Training and Doctrine Command, 1 July 1973* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1994), 18.

<sup>88</sup>Steven Metz, *Eisenhower as Strategist: The Coherent Use of Military Power in War and Peace* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, February, 1993), ch 3, available at: <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=359> (last accessed on November 26, 2012)

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